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STATISTICAL WORK IN NORTH VIETNAM

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STATISTICAL WORK IN NORTH VIETNAM

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Prior to the revolution there was nothing that could properly be called statistics in North Vietnam. Statistical work began after the revolution as the government began to place emphasis on financial and economic projects. However, the statistical work at that time was sporadic; there was not a comprehensive system of statistics on a national scale.

With the conclusion of peace by the Geneva Agreement of 1954, programs of rehabilitation to undo the havoc done by the fifteen-year-long war were initiated. At the same time, a systematic program of economic recovery and unified statistical work on a nation-wide basis was begun.

In February 1956, the Government promulgated a decree concerning the organization of a national statistical system which resulted in the establishment of the Central Statistical Bureau. The Bureau is an independent unit within the National Planning Commission, and is composed of the following six sections: Compilation Section, Industrial Section, Agricultural Section, Basic Construction Section, Trade Section, and Labor, Health, Education and Cultural Section. Branch offices of the Bureau were established in 33 provinces and the cities of Hanoi and Haiphong. In addition, statistical services have been established in various districts.

During the past three years, the statistical work has been substantiated by coordinating theory and practice, integrating experiences obtained in the course of the work, and by learning from the experiences gained in other socialist states. Today, the number of statistical workers has reached more than 70,000 in North Vietnam.

With progress in industry and agriculture, statistical systems have been organized in various ministries and their affiliated organizations--first in the industrial, and then in the commercial and agricultural sectors.

In order to train statistical staff workers, seven long-term training sessions have been organized by the Central Statistical Bureau and the Academy of Politico-Economics, and short-term training sessions have been offered by each provincial branch office of the Bureau. As a result, staff workers at present possess general knowledge concerning statistical work.

The establishment of a statistical system in North Vietnam in a comparatively short period of time is due to the experiences gained in the Soviet Union and Communist China.

The statistical system utilized in North Vietnam has made a great contribution to the Party and the Government. During the two year period between 1957 and 1958, a series of surveys were conducted in the agricultural sector of the economy, and data was collected in such categories as conditions of agricultural production (farming conditions), the extent of plantation area, levels of agricultural production and the raising of livestock. In the industrial sector, two surveys were conducted in 1958 on the private management of industry in large cities; thereby obtaining a realistic picture of the role of privately managed industry and handicraft industry.

In work on price statistics, great accomplishments have been made since 1957 in tracing the fluctuation of market prices in seven large cities.

In addition to the statistical work mentioned above, various charts, unified standards and methods of calculation have been improved during the past three years. At present, monthly, quarterly and annual reports are being filed, and private companies and jointly-operated enterprises issue quarterly reports.

Statistical charts were simplified early in 1959, facilitating prompt reporting. However, this is only a beginning on the program of improvement, and further improvements in statistical work will be necessary in the light of future economic development.

Since the system of making periodic statistical reports has been adopted in industry, building-construction commerce and transportation, the Central Statistical Bureau has been able to obtain an understanding of the basic economic conditions of the nation on a monthly, quarterly and annual basis, and to provide important data for economic planning. Since 1957 the Central Statistical Bureau has been making reports on the progress of the people's economic planning, and at the end of 1958 it made comprehensive reports on the progress made in rehabilitating the national economy. This year it has provided data for five-year planning. And, during the fourth quarter it conducted a nation-wide population census.

Although the accomplishments of the statistical work during the past three years have been great, as explained above, we find many defects if we take a closer look. The most serious is the lack of understanding of the nature and function of socialist statistical work. In other words, the failure to understand the necessity of conforming the statistical work to the day-to-day leadership of the Party. For this reason, a contradiction has developed between the set goals of the Party and statistical work.

Various new problems will arise in the course of the development of industry and agriculture, and the lack of political awareness in statistical work will cause a delay in grasping the problems. Because of this shortcoming, the statistical work has not been able to subordinate itself to the key projects of the Party, the statistical organizations have not successfully helped the Party, and statistical workers have suffered from a sense of uncertainty. In order to overcome this difficulty one must be clearly aware of his responsibilities, understand the main work of the Party, participate in production and the political struggle, and stand in the forefront of the current struggle of the masses.

Statistical workers have mainly based their thinking on the belief that they work for the sake of planning. Although there is a close relationship between statistical work and planning, there are other aspects to be considered.

Like any other work, statistical work must bring itself close to the masses. Thus, it requires political and technical competence. For this reason, it is necessary for a statistical worker to study the essentials of politics and to gain some scientific skills.

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